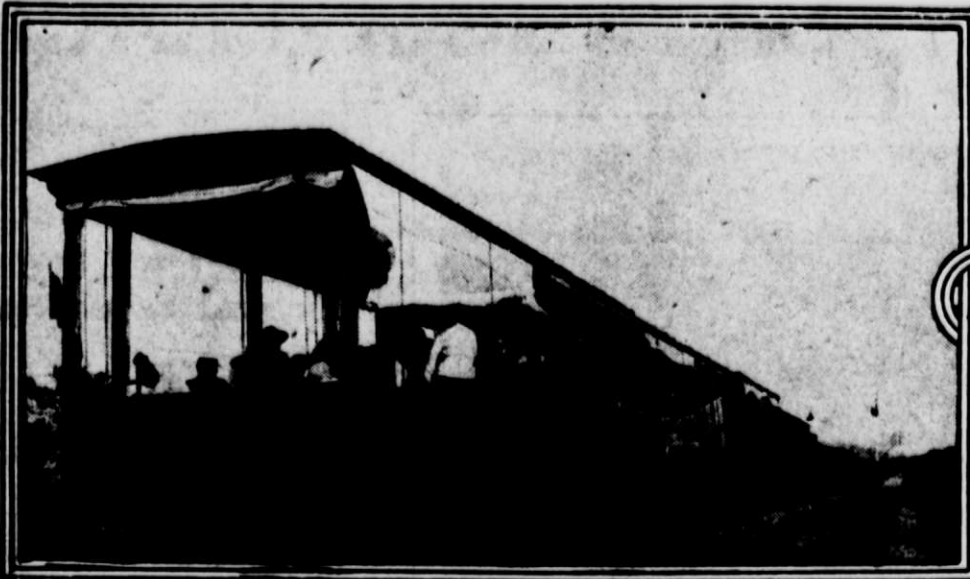


TRIALS OF THE TOURIST GUIDE AT THE PANAMA CANAL



Sightseeing train operated by United States Government.



Tourist ship Moltke at Colon.



Tourists on edge of Culebra Cut.

Official "Rubberneck" Conductor on Isthmus Target of Many Queer Questions Concerning the Great Project

THE tourist crop in Panama won't be a good one this year.

The official guide of the Isthmian Canal Commission, William M. Baxter, Jr., began his dissertation on tourists in this way as he sat on the rubberneck car at Gatun one day recently. His assistant had just taken two tourists over to look at the locks.

"That's a sample of it," continued Mr. Baxter. "Only two people this morning, and this time a year ago there would have been twenty. Can't pay expenses on less than ten. The steamship companies had counted on a whale of a business, arranged thirty-eight special cruises in addition to regular trips, and all but twelve of these have been called off. Instead of 40,000 tourists we'll be lucky if 10,000 come here during the dry months."

"The reason is simple. People say, 'Well, let's wait another year and sail through the canal.' They make a mistake, because next year every vestige of the interesting village life of the canal construction days will be gone, and this is as well worth seeing as the canal itself. But the tourists don't understand that. They are looking for large impressions, not for details."

"By the way, tourists are generally misunderstood. There seems to be an impression that every shipload is a Chautauqua circle let loose for a few minutes and fairly athirst for information. No such thing."

"In the first place there is no race or class of tourists. These people come from all races and every conceivable social and economic class. Likewise they come from all parts of the world. If I received word to-morrow that the Lhasa Llama was to be my special charge for the day I should not be surprised, and only slightly interested. Each person has a special individuality, and to generalize would surely do some one an injustice, overdo a few, underdo the many. Yet they have this in common: they have little time and want to fill every minute of it. As one old

fellow put it, 'I've got a week to rest up in on the ship.'

"And I find less difference between the people who come on the hurry up excursions and those who come to spend a week than I had expected. The hurry up people spend ten hours on the Isthmus, glance hurriedly at the dam, locks and canal, buy a Panama hat, rush into the cathedral, regret the seven mile interval that keeps them from seeing old Panama, eat lunch at the Tivoli and go away satisfied. Those who spend a week take things more leisurely and get more definite impressions. Yet I doubt if they get more accurate ideas."

"They do, however, have time to crowd in a few personal experiences. And it is these tourists that the guides have an opportunity to observe, sometimes to know. They are generally comfortable men and women of 50 years or more, a few splinters, and an occasional girl of near 20 years. Men between 25 and 45 are few. I suppose they are too busy to take three weeks for Panama; or if they are not they probably prefer spending those weeks nearer to cabaret-land."



Hotel Washington, Colon.

"People who appear to think they are doing the canal administration and its employees a great favor by condescending to look at the various sights are the most interesting psychological type. They are not interested especially, are usually disappointed and sometimes quite disapproving. Just recently I had a trying experience with one of these, and a woman too, which is unusual."

"She believed in a sea level canal. She regarded the lake with disfavor, and positively refused to look at the locks."

"It is very good, but a sea level

canal would be better and would have cost less in the end," she repeated.

"I was sorry we had no sea level canals to show her that day, but there was no use trying to tell her that it was not my fault. She disapproved of me about as much as of the locks, until I actually felt that perhaps I had made a mistake in going ahead with the lock canal."

"Where is the masonry dam for the purpose of diverting the Chagres River from the canal?" is a question often asked.

"The tourist has read a book, or per-

haps two books, about the canal on his way to the Isthmus. Books on Panama are probably no more inaccurate than books on Tibet; but there are more of them. And the inaccuracies are the most interesting points; therefore these lodge more firmly in the head of the average reader. Now somewhere in his book the man who asks me the question about the masonry dam has read of the sea level project. It is impossible to explain to him his error without hurting his pride, yet it is necessary to explain. He tries his best to convince me that I have overlooked a dam somewhere."

Expected Number of Travellers During Coming Dry Months Estimated at 30,000 Less Than Last Year

and I believe in the end he usually thinks it is being hidden from him. But when we pass the Rio Grande reservoir he is apt to save his face by exclaiming, 'Ah! Mr. Guide, this is the dam I was speaking about.'

"A man with an ear trumpet was one of the most intelligent and interested tourists I ever took around. He had read intelligently and asked intelligent questions. And he asked them every minute. On the sightseeing train he posted himself right alongside of me, so that I was talking into his trumpet all the time. In going about the work he stuck close by and was forever asking details."

"I stood it three days without any explosion, but finally it got under even my hide, and I began to hate the poor fellow. Wherever I turned I turned into that trumpet, and gradually I came to look upon the visitation not as a man with an ear trumpet but as an ear trumpet with a man. The trumpet became the largest thing in my existence."

"One afternoon I finished the lecture

up at the Tivoli, attended to a few little matters and then hopped off to the Hotel Central. In the cool patio I sat down and soon a glass of beer was smiling at me. A man I knew came in and we lost our troubles in discussing the relative merits of home brewed and imported beer. Suddenly a third voice broke in:

"You say the imported beer is doped?"

"I knew that voice, and turning slightly spoke into the trumpet: 'Yes, it's doped; won't you take some?'"

"My wife admits that I am naturally mean, but I will not. At least it was not meanness that made me act so badly in the case of the man with the umbrella. He was a small man who wore large eyeglasses and carried a very large umbrella. I think he was deaf, or slightly so, because he always sat very close to me when I was explaining the scenery as the car went from objective point to objective."

"When we passed anything that I did not explain he would poke me gently with the handle of the umbrella and say: 'Mr. Guide, what is that there?' or whatever it happened to be. After two days of this I had a black spot on my left leg where he had poked me, and both the spot and I were becoming sore."

"On the third day as we were about to cross the locks at Gatun on the foot-bridge I could see that he was a trifle nervous. He was right alongside me, so I said: 'Let me carry your umbrella for you and you take hold of both rails.' He did so. We walked across, I taking my station at the end of the procession. When we were almost to the other side I accidentally lost my grip on the umbrella and it fell through one of the manholes of a gate clear down into the dark pit. Of course I was apologetic and offered to have the gate taken apart in order to return the umbrella. But he pulled the coils upon my head by being very uninterested. Next day he appeared with a new umbrella, and the blue spot on my left leg increased in size."

RESTAURANT OWNER FOUND IT PROFITABLE TO EASE THE WAY FOR HIS MANAGER TO STEAL

NEWS that the post office at Morris Plains, N. J., has been robbed again comes so frequently that it causes comparatively little stir in the town. Twelve times in about the same number of months Uncle Sam's stamp dispensary has been looted.

The odd part of it has been that D. M. Merchant, the postmaster, has never got excited or irritated over it. He tries to be patient with the burglars. He leaves the safe unlocked and the combination is posted on the door, so that in case a careless employee locks the door, there will be no need of blowing the safe open. Every day the postmaster

sends the receipts to the bank and he has arranged to get his supply of stamps by the first morning mail delivery.

The postmaster's philosophical way of treating the affair recalls the odd story of Adolph Wilgers, who kept a cafe in the Borough of The Bronx for several years. He had a restaurant manager who closed up the restaurant and the adjoining cafe every night. Wilgers was fond of the manager, although he suspected his honesty. That is, he had missed sums of money at times and had set traps until he was certain the manager was the culprit.

The cash register had two drawers. A and B. When the manager came on at noon Wilgers locked up drawer A,

containing the receipts up to that hour, and the manager used drawer B from then on. Wilgers began to miss money from his locked drawer A shortly after his manager had asked for an increase in salary and had been refused. The amounts were small at the start. They increased until Wilgers decided he would leave no money in the drawer.

The next day his manager gave him notice that he intended to quit. He gave no reason except he was not getting enough money—which was significant, Wilgers thought. The proprietor took his manager one side and they had a beer together.

"Stay with me and everything will be fixed up," said Wilgers. After another beer he put his hand on his manager's

shoulder and added: "You'll see. You won't have any kick. Just you stay and run things the way you have been. You'll see."

The next day before the manager came on duty Wilgers sealed all of the morning's receipts except \$25, in a big envelope, leaving in sight a memorandum: "Loose change." The manager had consented to stay. When Wilgers examined drawer A again he found the "loose change" reduced by \$5. From that time on Wilgers sealed most of his money, but he never neglected to leave some "loose change." He explained his action at an outing of a singing society of which he was an officer as follows:

"You see, the manager was bound to steal anyway. And he was a good

manager—no better. I would not raise his salary because, while I knew he ought to get more money, I also knew he would steal even after his wages were increased. And you know, I didn't blame him for taking some. He was worth more money. He knew my trade to a dot, and everybody liked him."

"So I left enough loose change for him to think he could take some and it wouldn't be missed. Didn't he think I discovered the daily loss? Well, it's hard to say—and then you know he didn't care. He could have got more money elsewhere; but I think he felt better taking a few dollars. Felt smarter, you know. So I made it easier for him."

"He has his own place now. Wonder if his manager steals?"

"DEBUTANTE SLOUCH" CAUSE OF SENTIMENT AGAINST NEW DANCES, SAY THE MISSES HOYT

THE Misses Frances and Grace Hoyt are well known on the concert stage and as society entertainers. In one season they appeared 214 times with Sousa and in London and New York their clientele embraces royalty and kings of finance. They are impersonators, dancers, singers and all around gaiety mongers.

Recently they have added the neces-

sary accomplishment of the moment and at their afternoon thes dansants, held at the Marie Antoinette, they not only exhibit all the latest steps, the tango, maxixe, hesitation, &c., but they teach the unwieldy, aid the unwary and bring together seventy years and seventeen.

Though they had a slight feeling of resentment in the beginning, having been brought up in sight of the myriad church spires of New England and in-

herited a certain Puritanic slant morally, they confess that that resentment has long since evaporated and the modern dances have at the moment no more strenuous advocate than they. Their mother, Mrs. Russell Hoyt, who chaperones the young people at the dances, is equally placated.

They may hesitate in the popular waltz, but they do not in the statement that all the sentiment against the new dances may be traced to the tendencies

of a certain class of young girls, fortunately limited in number. These girls are the advocates of the "debutante slouch," a gait beside which the old-fashioned Grecian bend was a goddess-like pose.

"The debutante slouch is not only silly," exclaim the Misses Hoyt, "but vulgar as well. The young men who go about with the sort of girl who affects this extreme fashion are nice, well-behaved young chaps and are perfectly conventional in their manners. We have never had to criticize one of them, but it has been our painful duty several times to call the attention of the mothers to the girls' ways—naturally the mothers did not like it, but we have the courage of our convictions."

"Cut the debutante slouch out and there will be nothing left to complain of. So far the greatest advantage that has come out of the new dancing is that it has brought men and women together again and if the interest increases we would not be a bit surprised if men actually got to the point of sending violets and bouquets to women again, the way they used to do. Possibly they will even call. There is no knowing what may happen," and the interviewed, who have been caught in a cosy corner of the Marie Antoinette oak room, laugh together at the thought.

"Both auction and its forerunner, bridge, undoubtedly separated the sexes, as did golf. Women don't play golf as strenuously as men and in time the men preferred the game with their own sex and women were left out to seek their own amusement. Then men do not like to play for small stakes—the woman's economical way of approaching games of amusement—and so they went to their club and the women had their own auction parties. Marriage seemed to go out and even getting engaged wasn't done any more. Of course the feminist movement hasn't really brought the sexes together to any alarming extent."

"In regard to the Anglo-Saxon not being able to dance these dances, of course the American man and woman can dance them because they can do with them just what they have done with everything else, that is, take whatever is good for themselves, adapt, edit, arrange and imprint the resultant product with their own stamp."

"The American man is never so individual as he is in his dancing. A man who has lived in Paris and has not been in America for fifteen years remarked this winter on the individuality that was shown on a certain ballroom floor, where no two couples were dancing the same dance and yet all in perfect rhythm. To dance well a man must learn the steps, particularly the one step—four steps forward and four back, four slides, eight steps around and the grapevine. When he has mastered his steps ten chances to one he makes his own combinations."

"The out and out business man is the dance habitué at present," say the Misses Hoyt, "and is likely to continue so. He dropped out for a long time, leaving the laurals of the waked floor to the regular dancing man and to the ladies."

Just what there is about the new steps that interests him it is difficult to tell—possibly the vibration of energy."

"One man of this kind confessed the other day that he was perfectly furious that he could not make his feet behave and do as he wanted them to. 'I have got my mind trained pretty well,' he said, 'and my hands, but these miserable feet of mine go one way when I tell them to go the other. What am I going to do with them?'"

"Naturally the only answer to that was the old recipe of perseverance, and he is following it admirably."

"Another stated that he hated music and was stone deaf from childhood. He thought this a handicap, which it is not. Very good dancers are frequently afflicted with both ailments. So long as one can keep the beat, that is the essential thing."

The dangers pointed out by the medical profession are next referred to: the lack of "cardiac reserve" and the hard-

ening of the arteries. To this it is answered that in spite of themselves the doctors have to admit that the dancing craze is taking fees out of their pockets.

"We know of a physician who dangled those aforesaid horrors in front of a one-time client's face and then said: 'I must admit I never saw you look so well or your eyes shine so bright!'"

In conclusion the Misses Hoyt predict that the dance craze is going to last a long time.



Miss Hoyt.



Miss Frances Hoyt.